

Study on consumer Decision Making Process in the selection of Home Cleaning Company

Case Company: MHB Clean Helsinki

Mudassar Hussain

Bachelor's thesis
August 2017
International Business
Degree Programme in Business Administration

| | | |
|--|--|-------------------------------------|
| Author(s) Hussain, Mudassar | Type of publication Bachelor's thesis | Date August 2017 |
| | | Language of publication: English |
| | Number of pages 38 | Permission for web publication: Yes |
| Title of publication Study on Consumer Decision Making process in the Selection of Home Cleaning Company Case Company : MHB Clean Helsinki | | |
| Degree programme International Business | | |
| Supervisor(s) Piotr, Krawczyk | | |
| Assigned by MHB CLEAN | | |
| <p>Abstract</p> <p>The aim of this research was to study most effective factors affecting consumer buying behaviour in making decision about purchasing home cleaning services. Consumer behaviour comprises of four factors: cultural, social, personal and psychological factors.</p> <p>The thesis work was divided into a theory part and empirical part. The theoretical part discussed factors affecting consumer purchase decision and decision-making process and steps involved in it. The empirical part of the research work included a survey which was carried out through webropol-survey that included both qualitative and quantitative questions. Data were collected by a self-administered questionnaire shared with households via Facebook groups in Helsinki capital region and with JAMK international business students. A number open-ended questions introduced to the respondents to capture their opinion more freely, which helped the researcher to get more deep insights in regard to topic studied. Research onion method was used to carry out research work.</p> <p>Both by theoretical framework and survey results it was ascertained that social and personal factors were most important factors affecting consumer buying behaviour. Professionalism in quality of cleaning services was also an important factor and obvious reason behind subscribing home cleaning services. The customer journey revealed that they don't follow all the steps in finding cleaning company but instead some customers preferred company names selected probably based on their previous experience.</p> <p>In conclusion, all the factors had effect on consumer buying behaviour for purchasing cleaning services to some extent, however social and personal factors along with delivering quality service, were more evident overall.</p> | | |
| Keywords/tags (subjects) Consumer behaviour, home cleaning, Buying Process, Buying Behaviour | | |
| Miscellaneous | | |

Contents

| | | |
|----------|--|----------|
| 1 | Introduction | 2 |
| 2 | Objectives and summary of the research | 4 |
| 2.1 | Research Questions | 4 |
| 3 | Structure of the study..... | 4 |
| 4 | Consumer behaviour | 5 |
| 4.1 | Factors affecting consumer purchasing decision | 5 |
| 4.1.1 | Cultural factors | 6 |
| 4.1.2 | Sub culture..... | 7 |
| 4.1.3 | Social class | 7 |
| 4.2 | Social factors | 8 |
| 4.2.1 | Reference group | 8 |
| 4.2.2 | Family..... | 8 |
| 4.2.3 | Role and status | 8 |
| 4.3 | Personal factor | 9 |
| 4.3.1 | Age & lifecycle stage..... | 9 |
| 4.3.2 | Occupation..... | 9 |
| 4.3.3 | Economic circumstances | 10 |
| 4.3.4 | Life Style..... | 10 |
| 4.3.5 | Personality | 10 |
| 4.4 | Psychological | 11 |
| 4.4.1 | Motivation | 11 |
| 4.4.2 | Perceptions | 13 |
| 4.4.3 | Learning | 14 |

| | | |
|----------|--|-----------|
| 4.4.4 | Beliefs and attitudes | 14 |
| 5 | Decision making process | 15 |
| 6 | Home Cleaning Services | 18 |
| 6.1 | MHB Clean Home cleaning Service | 18 |
| 6.2 | Tax deduction on Home Cleaning Services – Finland..... | 18 |
| 7 | Research methodology – Research Onion | 19 |
| 7.1 | Research Philosophy | 19 |
| 7.2 | Research approaches | 20 |
| 7.3 | Research strategies | 20 |
| 7.4 | Research choices | 21 |
| 7.5 | Time horizons..... | 21 |
| 7.6 | Technique and procedures..... | 21 |
| 8 | Results | 23 |
| 9 | Conclusion..... | 30 |
| | References | 31 |
| | Appendices | 33 |

Figures

| | |
|--|----|
| Figure 1. Factors Affecting Consumer Behaviour (adapted from Kotler & Armstrong 2011) | 6 |
| Figure 2. A Brand Personality Framework (adapted from L. Aaker 1997)..... | 11 |
| Figure 3. Abraham Maslow’s hierarchy of needs (adapted from Solomon 2006)..... | 13 |
| Figure 4. Decision Making Process (Kotler and Armstrong 2011, 152) | 15 |
| Figure 5. The Research Onion (Saunders & Lewis 2009)..... | 19 |
| Figure 6 - Gender | 23 |
| Figure 7 - Relationship Status | 24 |
| Figure 8 - Monthly Income..... | 25 |

1 Introduction

Consumer behaviour is broadly studied field. It lets the companies understand how consumer decides about buying their product or acquiring services. Marketing managers are always interested to know more about consumers' behaviour so they can prepare better communication and advertising campaigns and messages about their products and services. Consumer makes buying decision every day and many people don't even know the factors which derive them to this decision. Usually the factors affecting consumer buying behavior include psychological, social, cultural and Personal (Kotler and Armstrong 2011, 134). Buying the new home cleaning service involves consumers' research for the best option available and it might take various factors in account in its decision-making process.

This thesis is about studying which factors of social, cultural, personal or psychological characteristics has the most effect on consumer decision making process when selecting home cleaning service company. The research work is carried out to highlight the important elements for customers in the household cleaning and let the service provider understand overall picture of customer behaviour towards the cleaning company with the help of understanding the factors affecting consumer behaviour for choosing a certain service provider. Better understanding of consumer behaviour would let the marketers make the service structure as desired and attractive for the household customer and maintain business activities according to customer demands. This research work would let the general house cleaning customer record their voice in understanding the companies what kind of service do they want which can improve their life quality with the tailored services by the service provider. Author has been working as home cleaning service provider in the Helsinki region and better understanding of the consumer behaviour in the cleaning service would give an idea which areas of the business to improve with a consumer oriented approach.

2 Objectives

The main objective of the research is to study out most significant factors that affect the consumer while purchasing the home cleaning service. The second objective of the research work is to find out how different consumers pass through purchase decision process.

In the process of buying a product or service there are different factors which affect the consumer buying behaviour. These factors include cultural ,social, psychological as well as personal factors. To maintain the focused topic scope of the study is limited to factors and actual buying process of cleaning service.

2.1 Research Questions

The main research question for the thesis is:

Which factors of cultural , social , psychological or personal characteristic has most effect on consumer buying behaviour in the process of selecting a home cleaning service company ?

3 Structure of the study

The thesis work is divided into two parts, the first one theoretical portion which start with the definition of consumer behaviour and its concept with the detailed study of different factors (social, cultural, psychological, Personal) affecting consumer behaviour. To understand the completely consumer buying behaviour its crucial to study also the buying process which very consumer to consumer, also taken into consideration.

The empirical part of the study is managed by using a qualitative and quantitative survey. Consequently, results are discussed and analyzed from survey regarding the theoretical part in order to answer the research question. Finally, conclusion is drawn and suggestion for future research will be presented.

4 Consumer behaviour

According to Khan (2006 , 4) , "Consumer behaviour can be defined as the decision making process and physical activity involved in acquiring , evaluating , using and disposing of goods and services" .

4.1 Factors affecting consumer purchasing decision

The idea of buying some product or services does not come suddenly but carry long process of thinking, analyzing options, and taking other factors in account to reach the conclusion. These days marketing decision makers spend more money than ever to understand who buys? why do they buy? when do they buy? where do they buy? why do they buy? (Kotler & Armstrong ,2011 ,134).

Consumer forms many shapes, ranging from an 8-year-old child pleading with her mother for a small toy to a Business man in a giant company deciding on an extremely costly computer system (Solomon 2006, 33). Consumer purchases of goods and services are highly influenced by cultural, social, personal and psychological characteristics as show in figure 1.1. As though it is not completely possible to keep control on these factors but marketer must keep in mind these factors into account. (Kotler 2010, 290-291)

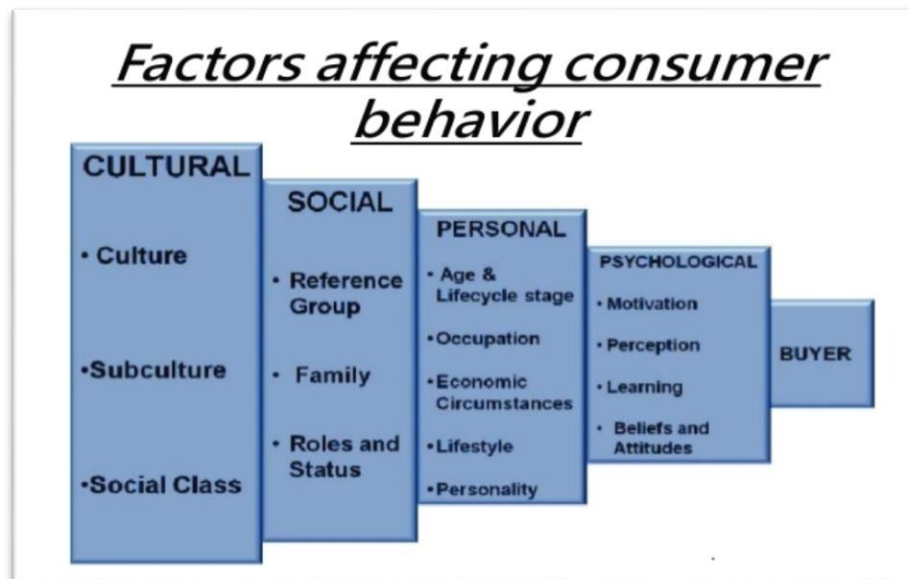


Figure 1. Factors Affecting Consumer Behaviour (adapted from Kotler & Armstrong 2011)

4.1.1 Cultural factors

Culture has the most important impact on consumer buying decision. It comprises of all the values, wishes, observation, attitude and values from his family and important institutions. Every country of the world has different cultures and its influences on the consumer buying decision may vary from one country to another. Marketers should be highly careful in adjusting the marketing campaigns according to the cultural setup in specific part of world to avoid the misapplication. (Kotler & Armstrong, 2011 136).

Cultural factors also effect the decision-making power within a family and the decision-making leader vary in different parts of the world. Male dominance is more visible in African cultures who might exercise their power in decision making process whereas in westerner culture men and woman are almost equal and decision is made impartially, possibly because both earn money to live in together (Blyth 2005, 58).

It's also vital to keep a sharp eye on cultural shifts which can make room for marketers to launch new product that might be wanted. In the Muslim cultures, the month of Ramadan is considered the Holy month and different companies launch new prod-

uct across the countries to add to their product line. The cultural shifts towards having better health and fitness has made boom in exercise industry and in more healthier food providers (Kotler & Armstrong, 2005, 257).

4.1.2 Sub culture

A part of the society in different parts of the world, comprises of people sharing similar customs, traditions and behaviour generating sub-culture within a broader culture. In India where many sub-cultures exist, culture of people from south depicts different values system from people in north, and west different from east. Similarly, the Muslim of one part of the country would be showing different level of interest from Hindu culture within a country for some product or service. Marketers are designing products according to the similar interest and background of the people to get the expected results (Khan 2006, 29).

In United States of America, companies have started different campaigns to attract people from specific ethnic groups and make them loyal towards the brands. The large group of people include Hispanic American, Asian American, African American as well as Mature consumer. Seeking the needs of such sub-cultural groups marketing teams often make tailored products and set their marketing programme accordingly (Kotler and Armstrong 2011, 136).

4.1.3 Social class

This group of people, sharing the similarities in occupation, wealth, income, education, power and prestige, form a unique buying behaviour. In this group, people share the same values and purchase similar products or services (khan 2006 ,29). Those, representing this class prefer to buy similar brand and product such as clothing, leisure, car industry. Marketers are very interested in social class as it would be easy to target them with the similar marketing programme based on their common liking pattern (Kotler and Armstrong 2011, 139).

4.2 Social factors

Some other factors such as family, reference groups and roles and status also effect the consumer behaviour significantly which is explained in the following:

4.2.1 Reference group

In our surrounding we see churches, schools, universities, club, distinguished individuals, friends they all serve as reference group. These formal and informal group make the consumer mind by shaping attitude or behaviour of consumer. Reference groups are usually symbolized as having the people who are acting as leader for the group and they influence others in a certain way. Such leaders are considered having more expertise and knowledge about some specific point (Burnett 2008 ,86).

Sometimes groups to which a person does not belong also exert great influence as ones wishes to belong to it, form aspirational group and they attract people in a unique way (Kotler and Armstrong 2005, 260).

4.2.2 Family

Family members is the most important reference group in influencing the consumer behaviour. In a family all the customs, values and tradition one child learn later becomes part of life and which set the various kind of behaviour and attitude pattern about different things (Khan 2006, 30). Another aspect of family consumer behaviour is also to know the decision maker, as in some family its husband making decision and sometimes wife purchases certain items. Whereas Children also influence a lot in buying child related accessories. To successfully influence the consumer behaviour in a family, its crucial for marketers to know who is making decision about buying product or service in question (Burnett 2008, 81).

4.2.3 Role and status

A person match to many groups – clubs, family, organization, politics, religion and persons standing in each of these can be seen in terms of status and roles. Role con-

sist of a unique way in which someone perform according to the persons in his surrounding (Kotler and Armstrong 2005, 297). A person chooses a product as he is perceived in a society and depicts his status among others.

4.3 Personal factor

A decision can be influenced by personal factors such as individual age and life cycle stage, occupation, economic circumstances, lifecycle and personality.

4.3.1 Age & lifecycle stage

Over the time individual change their preferences in buying some product or service. It is the age and time in life cycle due to which we make changes in clothing, furniture, recreation, and taste in food. As the family gets mature and experienced it changes in buying pattern significantly over the time (Kotler and Armstrong 2005,263). It is common to change purchasing behaviour during family life stage and switching to brands. Typical family was consisting of young singles and married couples with children but now a day the trend is getting shifted towards more nontraditional stages of family such as unmarried couple, childless couples, same sex couple, single parents and single marrying later in life, carrying various buying behaviour pattern (Kotler and Armstrong 2010, 170).

4.3.2 Occupation

An individual's purchasing power and occupation shape his purchasing pattern for goods and services. In some societies marketers try to estimate the purchasing power of individuals with their occupation and they use occupational prestige to know the worth of people (Solomon 2006, 438). To give special service, marketer sometimes tend to provide tailored products and services to high ranked occupational groups, so they always try to understand the right groups who have interest towards their product (Kotler and Armstrong 2005, 265).

4.3.3 Economic circumstances

The sharing of wealth in the society is of great important to marketing executives and social scientist because it give them fair idea that which class has most purchasing power and market potential (Solomon 2006, 438). Personal income changes the buying behaviour significantly so marketers keep sharp eye on the changing demographics of personal income, saving and interest rates. While showing the recession signs in the economy marketing managers start redesigning, repricing and repositioning their services and products in acting accordingly (Kotler and Armstrong 2005, 265)

4.3.4 Life Style

Life is the way of person living which can be assessed from interests, activities, as well as opinions and it contains more than just the personality and social class. It also gives the real picture of a person's interacting and acting in the world (Kotler and Armstrong 2005, 265). It is important to keep tracking the changing life style of customers by the values they represent in their life style which ultimately effect in their buying behaviour. Consumer do not just buy product rather they also buy values and lifestyle those products bring with them on buying (Kotler and Armstrong 2011, 146).

4.3.5 Personality

Personality make everyone unique with the differences in the traits of the person and not even two persons have same traits but many studies have been done to categorize the people sharing similar traits (Burnett 2008, 89). It carries traits of self-confidence, dominance, sociability, autonomous, defensiveness, adaptability and aggressiveness. Marketers are truly analyzing the consumer's personality as it can be fruitful in analyzing the consumer behaviour for some specific products or services (Kotler & Armstrong 2011, 147).

It is conceptualizing here that the brands constitute certain personalities with them and the consumers would make the choice for buying the product matching their own personality. Marketers present the brand personality in a way that human being will start resembling it with his or her own personality traits. According to one social scientist there are five personality traits; sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication and Ruggedness. (Kotler and Armstrong 2011, 147; L. Aaker 1997)

A Brand Personality Framework

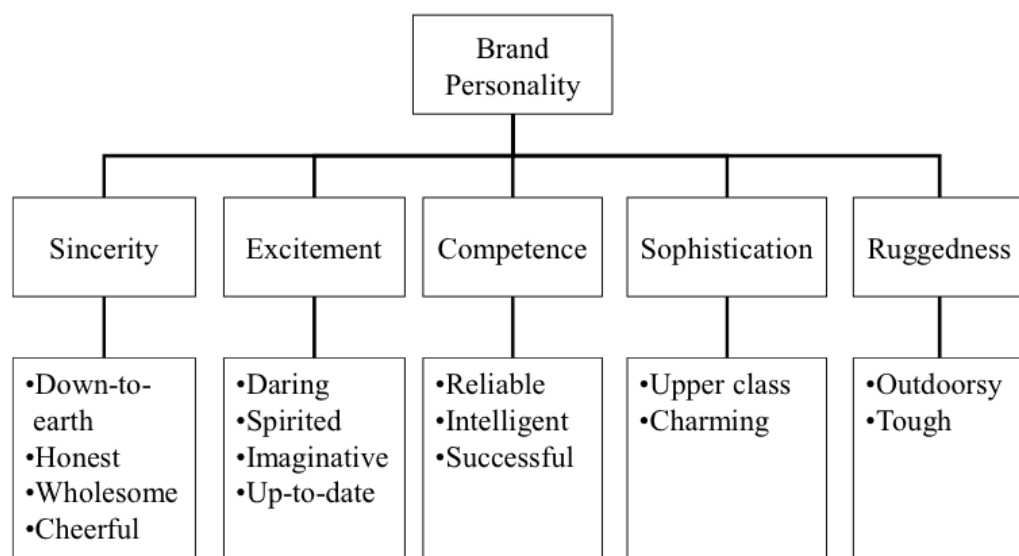


Figure 2. A Brand Personality Framework (adapted from L. Aaker 1997)

4.4 Psychological

Consumer behaviour is also highly influenced by four psychological factors, i-e motivation, perception, learning, beliefs and attitudes.

4.4.1 Motivation

A consumer can have various needs at a point of time and they might include some of biological necessities which can appear with the stressing state as hunger, thirst or

discomfort. Some other needs could arise psychologically from need of recognition, belong and esteem. When intensity of desire to get something rise to a sufficient level it originates the motive, which is need pressing a person mentally to quench the satisfaction (Kotler and Armstrong 2011, 147). To understand better social scientist have come up with two famous theories of motivation for human mind:

4.4.1.1 Freuds theory of motivation

According to Frued, people behaviour is changed unconsciously with the actual psychological forces. This concept tells the individuals repressing a lot of wishes as he or she grow up by the passage of time and getting higher mentality. The wishes in the consumer mind never dies but rather than appear again later in the life in form of dreams, slip of tongue, or in obsessive attitude or behaviour (Kotler and Armstrong 2005, 267). Sometimes even the buyer is not aware of the reason to buy a given product or service and he might be affected of personal subconscious motives. Marketers are trying hard to dig deeper into consumer motivational psychology to make effective marketing strategies and campaigns (Kotler and Armstrong 2011, 148).

4.4.1.2 Maslow theory of motivation

Abraham Maslow illustrates that how the people become motivated towards the needs at a peculiar time (Kotler and Armstrong 2005, 269). Figure XX hierarchy of needs from the most pressing at bottom and the top portion contain the least pressing. The theory is constructed on the basic rule that the most basic need is going to be fulfilled before continuing wishing about other on the ladder of hierarchy. On fulfilling the basic need motivation for this need start diminishing and person focus on the coming next crucial need. Here are the needs according to Maslow theory:

- Psychological – Basic need such as Hunger, Thirst, Sleep
- Safety – need for protection and fee secure
- Belongingness – Love and affection from others
- Ego needs – to make stable status among other by getting something
- Self-actualization – to get enhanced experiences and feel self-perfection

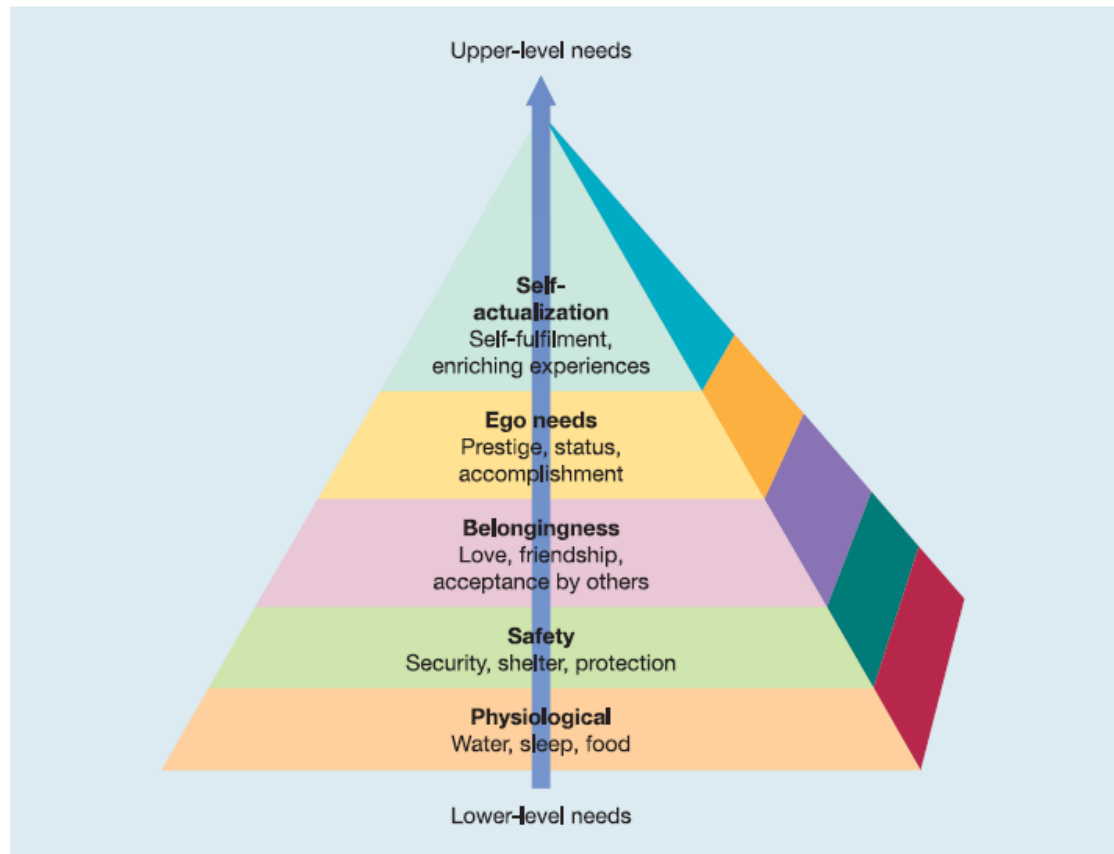


Figure 3. Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs (adapted from Solomon 2006)

4.4.2 Perceptions

A person with some motivation is always ready to act but the way of action could be different from individual to individual influenced by his perception of the situation. There is big chance of responding differently for two individuals again some stimuli as the perception of situation might be different with both (Kotler and Armstrong 2005, 273). People have a possibility to establish different perception of the same stimuli on account of three perceptual processes: selective attention, selective distortion and selective retention. In the selective attention process a person focuses only on small number of stimulus that he is exposed. Usually in this process consumer focuses only on their current need while neglecting all other stimuli coming in the environment. For example, a person who wishes to have new smartphone, will

put attention towards different smart phone companies' ad rather than focusing on car ads. Based on different belief, attitude and experience everyone has variety of perception approaches. Selective distortion explains the firm belief of people about some product or service which is already developed in their mind and will strengthen with the stimuli more. Whereas selective retention means that people will forget about the good points of brand which competitive and remember the good points of their favorite brand only (Kotler and Armstrong 2011, 149).

4.4.3 Learning

In the result of doing something people learn; and learning is termed as the significant changes in a person' behaviour arise from experiences. Learning occurs through the interplay of drives, cues, stimuli, response and reinforcement (Kotler and Armstrong 2011, 149). Learning is ongoing process and does not usually effect with instinctive responses, growth or temporary state of a person such a hunger, sleep or fatigue. Learning is always dynamic, subjective to change and adaptive (Burnett 2008, 87).

4.4.4 Beliefs and attitudes

Through experiencing and learning, consumer make up their belief and attitudes and which in turn influence their buying behaviour. Consumer belief about some brand or product could be on real knowledge, opinion or faith which sometimes can carry emotions also in it (Kotler and Armstrong 2011, 150). People having beliefs and attitude toward different product and services show the brand image which is important for marketers to know to influence consumer behaviour. If some people have made wrong belief about some product marketer try to fix it with launching campaign to correct them (Kotler and Armstrong 2005, 274).

5 Decision making process

A consumer decision making process includes of five stages to acquire a product or services. From the very beginning stage consumer recognize the need, gather the information and sources, evaluate alternatives and make the decision. (Kotler and Armstrong 2005, 314). Kotler also mention (2010) consumer can skip few steps in regular buying process and routine purchase. However, when a consumer considers buying new product and in complex purchase situation these five stages that are shown in figure 1.2 would be used to complete buying process.

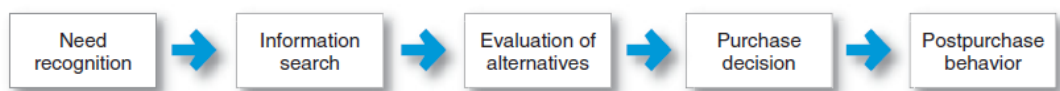


Figure 4. Decision Making Process (Kotler and Armstrong 2011, 152)

A consumer decision making process begins with the recognition of a need. The need to acquire some product or service can arise with the internal stimuli when the persons basic needs for instance emotions, hunger, thirst go to rise and turn into drive. Sometimes the external stimuli effects also on our mood to greater extent in form of advertisement on television or radio or from a discussion with a friend can led in thinking about purchasing new mobile phone. To make effective use of consumer data search stage, marketer at this point should focus on searching what made consumer search about a product or service (Kotler and Armstrong 2011, 152). In the second stage of decision making process consumer usually gathers information about the product. Sometimes consumer drive is so strong and the desired product is near he may not involve in initial information gathering process and purchase directly if not he may memorize the need or start searching information about the need (Kotler

and Armstrong 2011, 153). A consumer can obtain information from many available resources;

Personal sources; family friends, neighbors, colleagues

Public Sources; consumer rating organizations, mass media

Commercial; Sales people, internet, packaging, display

Experiential Sources; using the product, examining, handling

The corresponding influence of these information services may change product to product. Most of the time a consumer receives information about the product or service from the marketing stimuli which is controlled by marketers. Most influential sources come from personal recommendations and especially in services business they play a vital role. We get most of information from the commercial resources like from advertisement and website information whereas individual's opinion helps to evaluate and give the right picture of product. (Kotler and Armstrong 2005, 282). After gathering the sufficient amount of information about the product, consumer start evaluating the different options available and it's called evaluation of alternatives. Marketers are extensively interested to know the evaluation process as it will lead the consumer to select their brand. Consumer evaluation process is not so simple to make selection and he does not take single evaluation process in all the purchasing decision but he might use various evaluation process to reach at favorable decision. (Kotler and Armstrong 2011, 153). After the information about the product or service is collected now the evaluation process starts and consumer use information sources to reach to select the final brand choice. The evaluation process alters depending on the individual consumer and the buying situation. Sometimes consumer use intensive evaluation process by calculating different aspect and logical thinking, on other hand sometime consumers do small or almost not evaluation process but instead they buy instantly and believe in intuition. It also evident that consumer sometime rely on friends, family or reviews online or sales people advice for evaluation process more than trusting himself. (Kotler and Armstrong 2011, 154.). As the needs of information of product and services alters the consumer evaluate differently each of products or service. The factors which influence in the evaluation of different products include 1)

Timing and Costs 2) the existing amount of information with consumer 3) the risk involvement 4) consumer disposition in favor of a certain product (Burnett 2008 ,79). At the fifth stage, consumer divide the brands and plan to buy a product of service finally. It's seen that most preferred brands are purchased a lot of times but still there are two factors which can arise between the purchase intention and purchase decision. In the first factor attitude of someone special to you can influence you to buy or refrain from it. For instance, a car would be less interesting to buy if father mention it as an expensive brand. The second factor is unexpected situational factors. Individuals usually make their mind to buy something based on expected monthly salary, expected price, or desired product benefits but unexpected changes in such factors can change consumer purchasing intention. (Kotler and Armstrong 2005, 284.) Ease of location and payment is also a factor at the time of making purchasing decision. According to Blyth (2005) consumer most likely to select a retailer he or she has faith in and trust and select the convenient payment method to complete the purchase process. (48) It is also vital to simplify the buying process with adequate amount of information available with the product while consumer intend to buy something to make the buying process easy and its possible with help of effective advertising messages, for instance travel tour operator make package tour to get attention (Burnett 2008, 79). Decision making process keep going after consumer has made purchase as the consumer feelings and evaluation after the sale are quite important for the marketers because they can convince consumers to make purchases again and influence them to share with other people and vice versa (Burnett 2008, 81). After the purchase decision, the buyer of the product will be satisfied or dissatisfied and the answer to it lies in the link between consumer expectation and perceived performance. Consumer would be dissatisfied if the product short of expected value and on getting more than expected value the consumer would be happy and satisfied. Expected value as the success of winning customer suggest that seller should always promise to that extent what their brand can deliver to customer. (Kotler and Armstrong 2011, 154.)

6 Home Cleaning Services

6.1 MHB Clean Home cleaning Service

MHB Clean is a small start-up enterprises that has been operating since 2016 for home cleaning business. The company registered and started in the Jyväskylä city as it is the home town of owner and later on it moved to capital region Uusimaa to expand business operations. The company's overall operations are controlled by the owner who is also the author of this work.

To make the home cleaning business more effective and profitable, it's important to know the customer insights and perform the cleaning services with a high quality approach (Crockford 2011). In the capital region including Helsinki, Espoo and Vantaa there is huge potential for home cleaning customers as many of them are operating businesses also from home and looking for someone to do their chores. It's aimed, with the better understanding of consumer behaviour and decision making process it would be easy to make home cleaning service more effective and demanding for the customer.

6.2 Tax deduction on Home Cleaning Services – Finland

In Finland, customers of home cleaning services company can apply for domestic help deduction from the tax office. The maximum amount that each spouse can claim is €2400. There is also an own liability of €100, which means more than this amount can be claimed only as deduction. For many people this deduction from the tax office can be encouraging and appealing to buy the cleaning services but the factor non-awareness can play a role in it. Usually companies are advertising the tax benefit on their website or in the calculator of service booking system (Verohallinto 2017).

7 Research methodology – Research Onion

The author utilizes both primary and secondary sources in conducting research. Mainly, the theoretical framework is explained using secondary sources such as books, journals, and articles. To plan the research process with a proper framework” Research onion method” by saunders & Lewis (2012) was followed. In this approach, the research goes from the outer layer of research onion to most inner layer continuously.

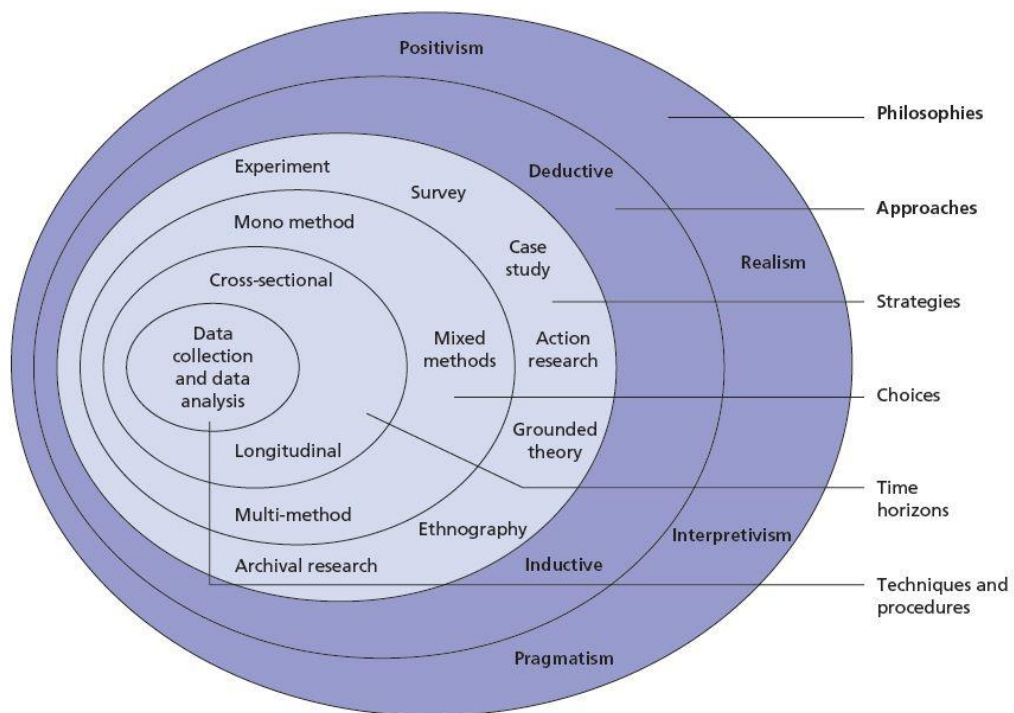


Figure 5. The Research Onion (Saunders & Lewis 2009)

7.1 Research Philosophy

The outer most layer of research onion consist of the research philosophy, which refers to the set of beliefs about the nature of reality being studies and investigated. The research philosophy research decides to use contains vital assumptions which serve as the foundation of the research strategy being adopted (saunders , Lewis & Thornhill 2009 , 108). For studying consumer behaviour researcher founded the pragmatism philosophy to be the most relevant one as it let the researcher to choose multiple views chosen to answer best the questions. This philosophy also gave

opportunity to choose the mixed and multiple methods for data collection including qualitative and quantitative methods. This philosophical stance deals with the practical approach, utilising different approaches to collect and interpret data (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2009, 598).

7.2 Research approaches

The second layer in the research onion is consisting of research approach and for this research researcher took deductive approach as it fits best with the pragmatism philosophy. In the deductive research approach existing theories and models are examined. This approach easily give opportunity to formulate questions based on existing theories of consumer behaviour. The second research approach is inductive research approach where the research move from observation, experiment, data collection and processing to form the theory (Cole 2015, 100). Pragmatism philosophy lets the research use both approaches in order to answer the research questions more efficiently.

7.3 Research strategies

The third layer of onion research method deals with the strategy used to collect data. For collecting data for this research, researcher considered the survey questionnaire method. The reason to select this particular method is that it was most economical way to collect data. The webropol survey form was used to collect the quantitative and qualitative data. The survey contained total of 14 questions out of which 5 questions were dedicated for collecting the qualitative data. for getting deep insight into the respondents answer, In certain quantitative question it was requested to give reason behind the answering which made the answers more credible. The survey questionnaire was launched in the mid July for 1 week and it generated total of 57 responses. The primary respondents for attempting survey were current home cleaning customers or who have ever used the home cleaning services. The survey was shared on the facebook in the area of Helsinki capital region and with the Jamk students and with researcher personal contacts who have used cleaning services.

7.4 Research choices

In this layer of research onion, researcher chooses qualitative ,quantitative or mixed method of data collection. Qualitative data is any data collection technique which include or generates non-numerical data whereas in the quantitative data numerical data is generated (Cole 2015 , 25).For studying the consumer behaviour in this research, researcher gathered both qualitative as well as quantitative data for analysis through the survey. Mixed method approach in this research helped to understand the answers collected through quantitative questions more thoroughly, as the respondents mentioned the reason behind their answers and choices.

7.5 Time horizon

The second last layer of the onion deals with the time devoted for conducting the research and its completion. There are two time horizons mentioned in the research onion. The research time with the limited period of time termed as cross-sectional studies and data must be collected within that time, whereas the research which is conducted repeatedly and data is collected many times over an extended period is termed as longitudinal studies. For this research, cross sectional approach was adopted as the time is limited for collecting data and results are to be generated within the total research period. The cross sectional approach is best for the project which are usually time constraints whereas in longitudinal research by observing people or behaviour over time researcher can collect various variables being studied if research process itself does not change (saunders , Lewis & Thornhill 2009 , 186).

7.6 Technique and procedures

The final layer in the research onion consists of techniques and procedures taken for data collection. In this research, researcher utilized both primary as well as secondary research methods. For secondary research detail literature review was done by reading number of books, articles , journal and newspaper reports.For the primary research survey questionnaire was developed and it was the key research instrument used in research.

The questionnaire was formed with the webropol survey and distributed through email to JAMK international business students and the general public living in Helsinki capital region through facebook groups. The respondents of the survey primarily were those who are using home cleaning services or have had experience previously. The survey was formed in such a way that along with quantitative data respondents could also provide qualitative data feedback in order to maximize the credibility of answers.

Survey started with the measurement of social and personal factors of consumer behaviour covering in questions 1 to 5. These questions included information about respondents gender, age, relationship status, personality and income level. With the help of these answers, social and personal factors were examined among home cleaning customers. To get idea about the customer's journey in decision making process for selecting home cleaning service provider, it was asked in question 6 and 8. Respondents were given free hand option to write other than given options in other box in order to generate qualitative data. To make sensible finding; Some questions had to be arranged in such a way that they might consist of various factors affecting consumer buying behaviour as answer to the question, which could be potential reason behind their behaviour. For such questions detailed factors were questioned in question 7, 10 and 14. To find out the psychological factors in home cleaning services it was asked whether they had any prejudice against home cleaning service that they don't subscribe cleaning service or switch to another service company. To gather such information, two short question/answer were asked to get the open ended responses. Through the general perception about home cleaning business as the service for rich people, it was also asked whether they believe so, in question number 13.

Questionnaire was tested before publishing with the group of 5 people in order to minimize any potential error while collecting feedback. After consulting with thesis supervisor, the questions were added options of providing additional information about respondent rating in answers, in order to make more reliable responses. The questionnaire was opened for 1 week and it generated 58 responses.

8 Results

The survey generated total of 58 responses. It started with the general questions of respondents' gender, age, marital status and income level. Out of total 57 respondents, there were 32 male and 25 female respondents who have dealt with home cleaning service. Most of the respondents in the survey belong to young age group which was 17-27 years old and respondents for this group were 34, in the second group of age (28-45) 15 people appeared whereas 45+ respondents counted for 10 in number.

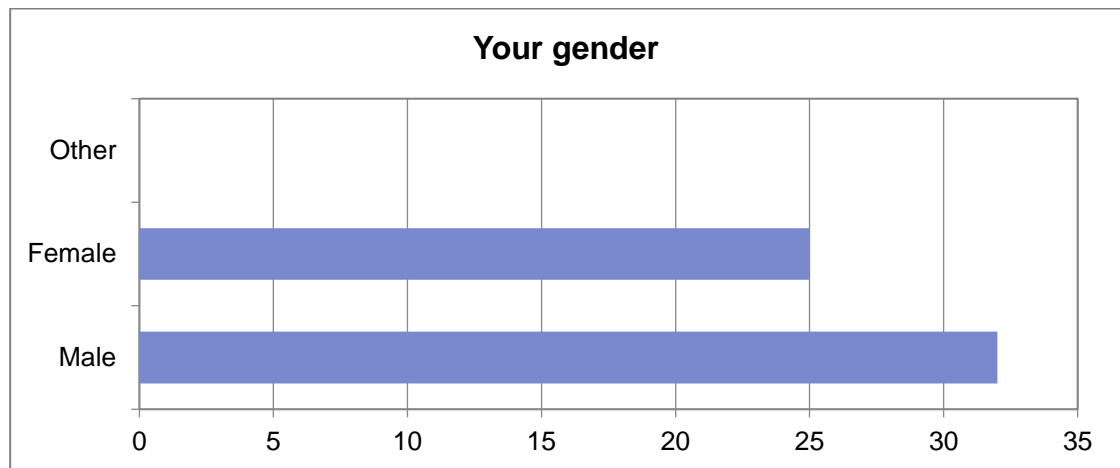


Figure 6 - Gender

In the first five question, there was also question about to choose relationship status, and majority of people were married (29). The second bigger number of respondents were living single life (15) whereas in relationship couples were 12 in number. There was also 1 respondent with availing option of other but the answer was not mentioned clearly. This option was created keeping in mind the people who are separated, divorced or want to write some other form of relationship.

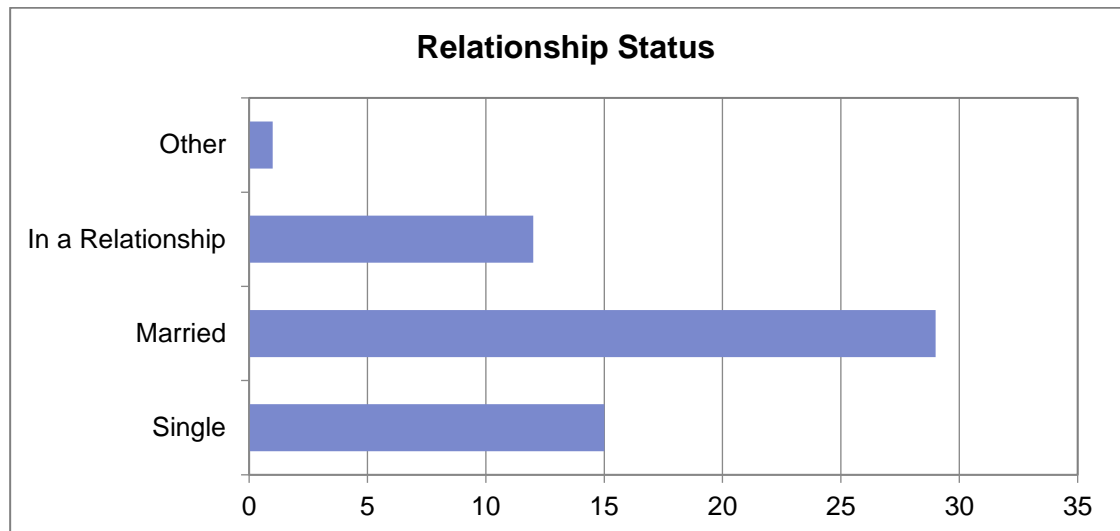


Figure 7 - Relationship Status

To know the respondent's employment and occupation situation it was asked to choose the answer from given option or mention open answer through other option. Majority of this questions respondent were employed and the second bigger number was of students. There were 24 employed respondents and 21 of them were students. 7 people were working as entrepreneur in their own business and 3 of them were unemployed. Two respondents preferred to choose "other" option and mentioned their profession as professor and retired person.

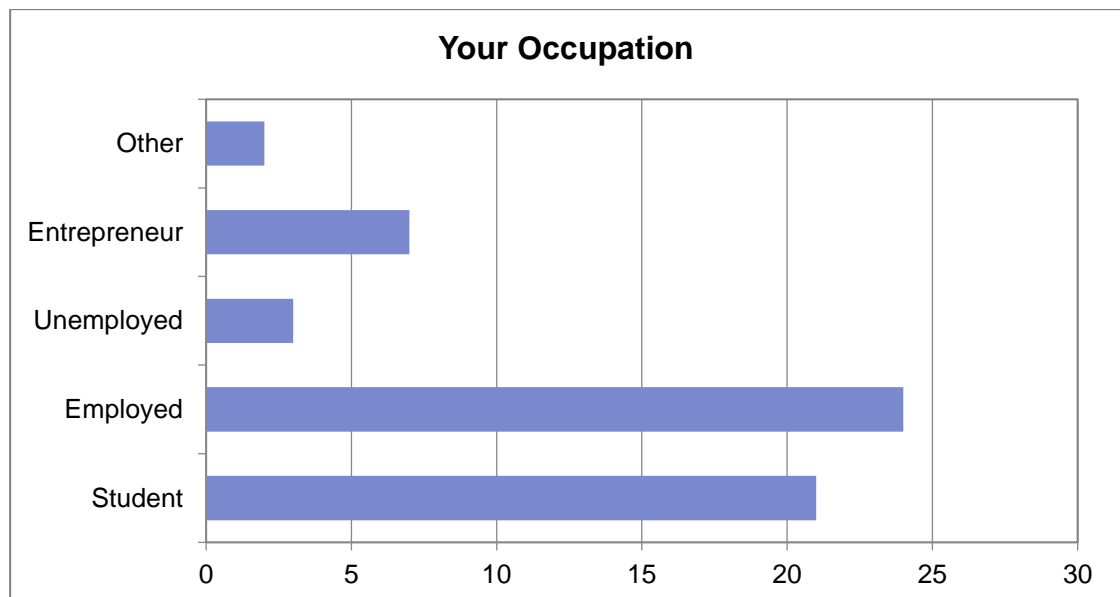


Figure - Your occupation

To know the monthly income of respondents it was asked to choose from the given ranges. In the figure XX it can be seen, 26 respondents had monthly income less than €1000, people with income level €2000-€3000 were 13 whereas people with more than €4000 income level were 11 in number. Only 7 respondents were earning €3000 - €4000 income during the month. Majority of this group have income less than €1000 a month which could be due to the fact that many respondents include students who are not employed and have a low income level. The evidence to this can be seen in the previous question.

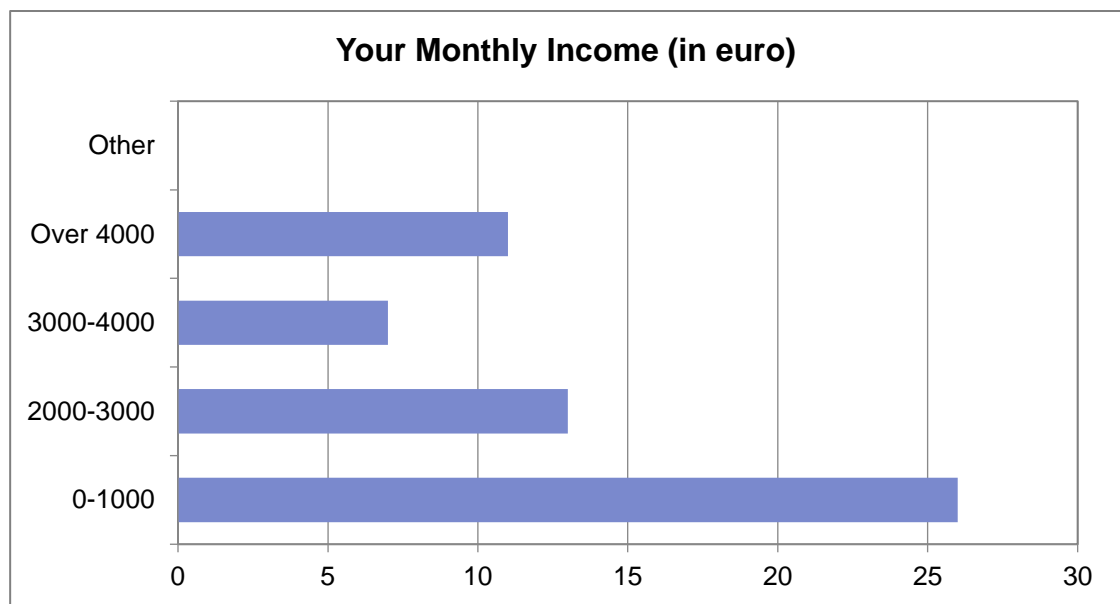


Figure 8 - Monthly Income

Question 6 -How would you find a good home cleaning company?

It was important to know that while thinking about subscribing home cleaning services what comes in purchaser's mind which can help in purchasing decision process. To answer to this question, coincidentally same amount of people 35 each mentioned "asking from friends and family" and "searching on internet" to be the best methods for them. According to Khan (2006,30) in a family all customer values and tradition later become part of life of an individual which sets various kind of behaviour and attitude pattern. There were also people who read blogs to get more information about the service provider. Generating qualitative responses 1 respondent said that his mother owns a cleaning company one knew already a good cleaning

company. This question was not marked as compulsory and consequently total of 56 people attempted this question.

Question 7 – what is the main reason you subscribe for home cleaning service?

To know the reason behind subscribing home cleaning services it was questioned to write the reason or choose from suggested options in question number 7. Such question was asked to see that whether there is any factor from social, personal or other factors involved, which take the consumer to subscribe for cleaning services. Majority of the respondents (43) considered “time saving” to be the biggest advantage from subscription of home cleaning service. With a slightly lesser amount, 39, people said, “to get home cleaned professionally”, they subscribe home cleaning services. Some people were subscribing services for cleaning only on some special event or celebration (8) and 5 wanted to experience the services of cleaning by professional company. This question also generated three open answers with one negative response of not showing willingness of subscribing cleaning services and the reason behind it was of lacking trust on cleaning services. One respondents said, “because we cannot clean so much so we prefer to hire cleaning services”. Feeling of being rich by subscribing home cleaning services, was also one of the reason among the respondents. Peoples expectation from cleaning company about professional quality seem quite high in the lights of these answers. The answers from this particular question highlight the personal factors to be the reason behind subscribing home cleaning services for cleaning customers.

Question 8 - How do you buy a home cleaning service?

To know the consumer decision making process this question was designed to ask the consumer that how do they buy home cleaning services. There were 25 people who knew already a good cleaning company for their home and 23 said to search on internet would be the best starting point for them. 5 respondents knew already bunch of companies to evaluate them for getting cleaning services. Two respondents were not subscribing home cleaning services mentioning the lack of money and trust on companies to be the main reason behind and the other respondent was able to

manage himself since the apartment size is not big for him to clean. According to Kotler and Armstrong (2011,152) consumer follow all the steps in normal purchase. With the evidence to answer about good cleaning companies, 25 consumers already know about reliable cleaning companies so most probably they won't involve in all the steps of decision making but rather than directly purchase the service. Whereas those who have not made decision about cleaning company would probably follow all the steps included in decision making process.

Question 9 – do you consider a home cleaning service as a status/symbol to be recognized by your friends, family and society?

According to Kotler and Armstrong a person usually buys the product or service as he or she is perceived in the society (2005, 297). To know the effect of roles and status in society with the home cleaning customer, it was questioned that whether roles or status is the reason that they subscribe home cleaning service. With a huge difference only 20 people thought that they are important for subscribing the home cleaning service. Those who replied yes in the question, mostly mentioned that they have role and status among their friend so they prefer to get the job done by service company. Most of the respondent (30) believe that it's not the pride of role or status behind their subscribing cleaning services but rather they said it be their genuine need, as it could be for practical reason or for older ones. There were also 8 people mentioning that it might be the reason but mostly for rich people.

Question no 10 – what factors influence you most on selecting a home cleaning service provider?

To know the factors behind the selection of home cleaning service according to current market trends, it was asked do the given factors affect them or not. 42 People mentioned "reputation and market position of company" to be biggest reason, whereas with a slightly lower number, 40 people said, "friends and family" are important members who induce them to select some service company. As a lot of companies are investing on professional image of company, 15 people also pointed it out, and to 12 people size of the company is good indicator for a good and reliable company. There were 5 people from each group of those who believe that company's

website is important to judge the company and from “others” who mostly said price make big impact on their decision. 2 people also believed that catchy advertisement sometime work for them to get their attention toward a service provider to get service. Friends and Family after the reputation of company is biggest factor for subscribing home cleaning services among respondents.

Prejudice against Cleaning Service Provider – it was asked to know whether consumer has prejudice against the cleaning services company and if so, where it comes from. To know the feelings of customer towards the service, it was questioned assuming they don’t subscribe home cleaning service and asked to give the reason also for it. The second finding was about changing service provider and reason for it which was asked in the next question number 12. It was also asked in question 13 whether respondents feel that cleaning service is meant for only rich people. Majority of the respondents were students who mentioned the low finances to be the main reason for not subscribing cleaning services. Other respondents of this question consist of also those people who believe to have lower money is the reason for them to not get the cleaning service. There were also few respondents who stated cleaning service is not a justifiable cleaning expense and they prefer to do themselves. In answering the reason for switching service provider those who had used the cleaning services replied commonly the quality to be unsatisfactory as the biggest reason for getting company changed following the price of service, which was raised also as a concerned reason for switching to different service provider. Quality and price was nominated by those who have not yet experienced of home cleaning service, would be the possible reason for their changing service provider if ever they would subscribe in future. With a general perception about the home cleaning customers being rich it was asked, “do you think home cleaning service is only for rich people”? There were 26 people from each group of saying yes and no to the answer and 5 chose to say maybe. They mentioned since not everyone can afford so they would be rich who subscribe home cleaning service. People who said it’s not only for rich people justified their answer by saying that cleaning service is rather need, as there are invalid and elder people who cannot clean themselves need such service. Moreover, it was also highlighted that the tax deduction makes huge impact on decision as after such

rebate cleaning expense cuts into half and we can save a lot of time for doing other tasks. Some other answers included that its salary amount which decides who is rich?

Customer insights – to find out how much importance a customer gives to different factors of cleaning service provider's characteristic, it was checked by getting rating response by the respondents and short answer for such ratings. This question was compulsory to attempt so in result all the 58 respondents gave their opinion about the characteristic of cleaning service provider. A huge amount of people (46) believes that "quality in cleaning" is the compulsory characteristic for a home cleaning company. Respondent wrote about their rating that reason for subscribing cleaning company is expectation of quality work and called it to the only real factor for good cleaning company. Some other who chose a bit less important also suggested that by providing quality cleaning services it's easy for them to stick with one service company and might have loyalty towards it. People probably also prefer to the friendly cleaning staff and easy schedule for service provider. There were 34 and 32 respondents who called friendly cleaning staff and service schedule for performing cleaning job as compulsory respectively. Through such friendly staff it's easy for them to co-create cleaning plan in home according to one respondents. People also suggested to be available often as they might need cleaning worker on short notice. It also highlighted the concern of security for home as it was mentioned since we are letting someone to enter in our home, the cleaner should be friendly and professional. As expected, people are also very looking forward for the best customer service. 26 people said it should be best as compulsory or at good level. Customer from home cleaning seem to expect their voice listened on urgent basis as they mentioned the customer care department respond quickly so they can plan the cleaning schedule easily. In general, responding this question people expected the overall cleaning quality matters to them mostly and to be listened by concerned on time. Price is an important factor for shaping consumer behaviour towards the service facility as 24 people wished to have cheap price for cleaning service whereas 19 called it to be important. Many respondents said it would be nice to have cheap price but then its appreciated if it would be according to Finnish laws. There is majority of those people

who believe that it should be according to quality of cleaning and price does not matter in that case. As many companies investing in marketing their product or service to know the customer behaviour towards it how important are advertisement and marketing by the cleaning company. Majority of them called it to unnecessary or they did not need it. Some of them mention it to be a good thing to remind about the company.

9 Conclusion

The aim of this study was to study that how cultural, social, psychological and personal factors affect home cleaning service customer in making purchase decision and to gain information on consumer decision making process. The theory part discussed the details of factors affecting consumer behaviour as well as decision making process. A Survey questionnaire was made including the quantitative and qualitative data questions based on empirical research.

Results in general suggest that social as well as personal factors have biggest impact on home cleaning customer in buying cleaning services. This gives answer to research question which was set for study. Quality of cleaning service, through many evidences is also the single most important factor for acquiring such professional services. In addition, consumers, could also base their selection on attitude and beliefs of psychological factors. It became also obvious that it's not a case always to follow complete decision-making process by a cleaning customer, as some customer might skip some steps in doing so.

For future studies, it is recommended to have depth interview of the home cleaning customers to get the more detailed information about the factors affecting consumer behavior. In this study, it would have been wise to gather huge amount of quantitative data to get the detailed overview of home cleaning customer. Moreover, if the product in this study would have been cheaper and more often purchased the results could have been significantly different.

References

- Blyth J. , 2005 , Essential of Marketing 3rd Ed, Prentice Hall Financial Times.
- Burnett J.,2008 , Core concepts of Marketing , Jacob foundation , Zurich , Switzerland.
- Cole A. 2015, The implications of consumer behaviour for marketing , Anchor academic publishing
- Crockford T. 2011., Cleaning Quality key to survival in Finland , European Cleaning journal. Accessed on 15th june 2017 . Retrieved from <http://www.europeancleaningjournal.com/magazine/articles/european-reports/cleaning-quality-key-to-survival-in-finland>
- Ella M. 2015 , Complaints management in cleaning services. Bachelor thesis . Laurea University of Applied Sciences , Degree programme in facility management, Accessed on 17th June 2017 . Retrieved from <https://publications.theseus.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/101638/Complaints%20management%20in%20cleaning%20services.pdf?sequence=1>
- Erika K. 2016, Improving household cleaning services for PRN-Kiinteistösiivous. Bachelor thesis. Laurea university of applied sciences, Degree programme in facility management , accessed on 17th june 2014 retrieved from <https://publications.theseus.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/106610/Improving%20household%20cleaning.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>
- Karimi S., 2013. A purchase decision making process model of online consumer and its influential factor a cross sector analysis. , Phd Thesis. Manchester Business School , faculty of humanities. Accessed 15 june 2017 . Retrieved from <https://www.escholar.manchester.ac.uk/api/datastream?publicationPid=uk-ac-man-scw:189583&datastreamId=FULL-TEXT.PDF>
- Khan M., 2006. Consumer behaviour and advertising management , new age international publishers.
- Kotler P. & Armstrong G. ,2011. Principle of marketing 14th Ed. , Pearson Education Inc. Prentice Hall.
- Kotler P.,Wong V., Saunder J.,Armstrong G., 2005 , Principle of Marketing , 4th European Ed. Pearson Education Inc. Prentice Hall.
- R. Kardes F., L. Cronley Maria., W. Cline T., N.D , Consumer Behaviour , South western cengage Learning
- Research Onion explanation of the concepts 18th May 2017, Accessed on 16th june 2017. Retrieved from <https://www.ukessays.com/essays/psychology/explanation-of-the-concept-of-research-onion-psychology-essay.php>

Saunders M.,Lewis P.,Thornhill A., 2009. Research Methods for business students 5th Edition , Pearson Education inc. Prentice Hall.

Solomon M.,Bamossy G.,Askegaard S., & K.Hogg M., 2006. Consumer Behaviour A european Perspective 3rd Ed. Prentice Hall Financial Times.

VerKotitalousvähennys ,accessed on 15th june 2017. Retrieved from <https://www.vero.fi/henkiloasiakkaat/verokortti-ja-veroilmoitus/tulot-ja-vahennykset/kotitalousvahennys/>

Appendices

Appendix 1. Cover Letter

Hello,

My name is Mudassar Hussain, final year student from JAMK International business department. I am writing a thesis on consumer behaviour in the Home cleaning business. For my thesis, I am doing a survey on customer selection of home cleaning service company and decision process. I kindly request you to complete this survey so I can add your opinion to my work also. *(It will take 2-3 minutes)*

Important: Survey is being conducted completely anonymous, will be kept completely confidential and used only for bachelor thesis writing purpose, under kind supervision of senior JAMK Lecture Mr. Piotr Krawczyk (supervisor).

Through Completing this survey:

- You will learn about thesis survey structure for your studies also - Webropol Survey
- Experience a survey about the consumer behaviour
- Learn about quantitative and qualitative survey structure
- support your fellow IB student (Thank you 😊)

If you know someone who uses home cleaning service or have experienced the service already please share this link with him.

Link to survey:

Need Help! Please contact me at h2275@student.jamk.fi or +358 401400786.

Thanks

Mudassar Hussain

JAMK IB Student

Appendix 2. Survey**Home Cleaning Service for your Home****1. Your gender ***

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Other

2. Your Age *

- ☐ 17-27
- ☐ 28-45
- ☐ 45+

3. Relationship Status *

- ☐ Single
- ☐ Married
- ☐ In a Relationship
- ☐ Other

4. Your Occupation *

- ☐ Student
- ☐ Employed
- ☐ Unemployed
- ☐ Entrepreneur
- ☐ Other

5. Your Monthly Income (in euro) *

- ☐ 0-1000
☐ 2000-3000
☐ 3000-4000
☐ Over 4000
☐ Other
☐ _____

6. How would you find a good home cleaning service provider for your home?

- ☐ Ask Friends & Family
☐ Search on the Internet
☐ Read blogs to find out
☐ Other
☐ _____

7. What is the main reason you subscribe for Home Cleaning Service? *

You can select more than one option.

- ☐ Time Saving
☐ To get home cleaned professionally
☐ To get experience of cleaning by a company
☐ Cleaning only on special occasions (E.g. Celebration)
☐ Other
☐ _____

8. How do you buy a Home cleaning service? *

(Please select the one option)

- ☐ I know already a good cleaning company
☐ I would search on internet
☐ I have a list of home cleaning companies and would select a best from it

☐ I don't subscribe Home Cleaning Service (Please mention reason in Box)

☐ Whenever I buy, I evaluate it before getting service again

☐ Other

9. Do you consider a Home Cleaning Service as a status/Symbol to be recognized by your friends, family and society? *

Please mention reason in Box.

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ May Be

☐ Other

10. What factor influence you most on selecting a particular Home Cleaning Service provider? *

☐ Friends & Family Suggestions

☐ Reputation & Market position of a company

☐ Big Size of Company

☐ Professional Image of company

☐ Judge from Company Website

☐ Catchy Advertisement

☐ Other

11. If Anything stopping you to subscribe a Home cleaning service, what it could be? (Few words Please.)

E.g. If you are a student and you can do your cleaning yourself or you never thought about cleaning by a service provider.

250 characters remaining

12. If you ever plan to switch to another Home cleaning company what would be the possible reason? (Few words Please)

250 characters remaining

13. Do you believe home cleaning service is only for rich people?

Please mention reason also for your answer.

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ May Be

☐ Other

14. What characteristics are important according to you for a good Home cleaning Service provider? *

Please give small reason also in the box for your rating.

| | | Not im- portant at all | Neu- tral | Im- portant | Very Im- portant | Com- pulsory |
|---|-------|------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Company's Profes- sional Look | _____ | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Quality of Cleaning | _____ | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Cheap price for Ser- vice | _____ | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Easy service sched- ule | _____ | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Friendly Cleaning Staff | _____ | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| First Class Customer Care | _____ | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Heavy Advertisement & Media Presence | _____ | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |